at vacuum heads 1040. As described above, manifold 108 includes a plurality of nozzles positioned across the width of support 1020 (i.e., the cross-machine direction) to deliver and inject absorbent material in bands across the composite's width. Wet composite 1200 is further dewatered along support 1020 and then dried by drying means 1160 (e.g., heated cans, drying oven, through-air dryer). A top plan view of the injection of absorbent material into the fibrous slurry is illustrated in FIGURE 12B.

A1 cont

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 31, line 14, to read as follows:

The absorbent composite of the invention can be formed by devices and processes that include a twin-wire configuration (i.e., twin-forming wires). A representative twin-wire machine for forming composites of the invention is shown in FIGURE 13. Referring to FIGURE 13, machine 200 includes twin-forming wires 202 and 204 into which the composite's components are deposited. Basically, fibrous slurry 1240 is introduced into headbox 212 and deposited onto forming wires 202 and 204 at the headbox exit. Vacuum elements 206 and 208 dewater the fibrous slurries deposited on wires 202 and 204, respectively, to provide partially dewatered webs that exit the twin-wire portion of the machine as partially dewatered web 1260. Web 1260 continues to travel along wire 202 and continues to be dewatered by additional vacuum elements 210 to provide wet composite 1200 which is then dried by drying means 216 to provide composite 10.

A2

[Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 31, line 26, to read as follows:]

Absorbent material can be introduced into the fibrous web at any one of several positions in the twin-wire process depending on the desired product configuration. For example, absorbent material can be introduced after the partially dewatered fibrous web has exited the twin-wire portion of the machine and has traveled along wire 202. Referring to FIGURE 13,

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absorbent material 1220 can be injected onto partially dewatered fibrous web 1260 at position 1. Alternatively, absorbent material can be introduced into the partially dewatered fibrous web prior to the web exiting the twin-wire portion of the machine (i.e., in the headbox). Referring to FIGURE 13, absorbent material 1220 can be injected into the partially dewatered web at positions 2, 3, or 4, or other positions along wires 202 and 204 where the web has been at least partially dewatered. Absorbent material can be introduced into the partially dewatered web formed and traveling along wire 202 and/or 204. As noted above, to form the composite of the invention having bands of absorbent material extending in the composite's machine direction, absorbent material is injected into the partially dewatered fibrous webs by nozzles spaced laterally across the width of the web. The nozzles are connected to an absorbent material supply. The nozzles can be positioned in various positions (e.g., positions 1, 2, or 3 in FIGURE 13) as described above. For example, referring to FIGURE 13, nozzles can be located at positions 2 to inject absorbent material into partially dewatered webs on wires 202 and 204. Generally, the extent of mixing of fibers with absorbent material decreases as the fibrous web is dewatered (e.g., less mixing at position 1 than at position 2, and less mixing at position 2 than at position 3).

a2 cont

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 33, line 28, to read as follows:

Referring to FIGURES 13 and 14A, composite 10 having strata 11 can be formed by machine 200. For composites in which strata 11 comprise the same components, a single fiber furnish 1240 is introduced into headbox 212. For forming composites having strata 11 comprising different components, headbox 212 includes one or more baffles 214 for the introduction of fiber furnishes (e.g., 1240a, 1240b, and 1240c) having different compositions. In such a method, the upper and lower strata can be formed to include different components and have different basis weights and properties.

a3

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